DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 338 977 CG 023 798

AUTHOR Thompson, Jay C.; And Others
TITLE Should Students Work? The Relationship between Part-Time Employment and Substance Usage.
PUB DATE Oct 91
NOTE 18p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Mid-Western Educational Research Association (Chicago, IL, October 16-19, 1991).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Adolescents; *Drinking; *Drug Use; Elementary School Students; Intermediate Grades; *Part Time Employment; Secondary Education; Secondary School Students; Smoking; *Student Employment; Substance Abuse

ABSTRACT

American society has placed considerable emphasis on the value of a part-time job for working-age students. This work is infrequently based upon real economic need. Many adults believe employment will teach a young person many important traits such as responsibility, time-management, budget management, and organizational skills. Although this may be the case for some young people, this study found data to support the theory that students who are employed during the school year are more susceptible to substance use and abuse than those who do not work. This study examined the relationship between student part-time employment and use of tobacco, alcohol, marijuana, cocaine, over-the-counter drugs, and other substances. Students (N=7,426) in grades 6 through 12 in six school districts in a midwestern suburban/rural setting were surveyed. Results indicated that there was a strong relationship between use of tobacco, alcohol, and marijuana and student employment. Student employment was correlated with cocaine use, and the use of other drugs. Student employment can lead to an over-commitment to work at the expense of school. With tobacco, alcohol, and drugs a factor in today's society, it is imperative for parents, employers, and educators to ensure that students with extra spending money are not at risk of falling into the substance abuse trap through their work experiences. (16 tables) (LLL)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED338927

SHOULD STUDENTS WORK?

The Relationship Between Part-time Employment and Substance Usage

by

Jay C. Thompson, Jr.
Christina M. Rice
Van E. Cooley
and
C. Van Nelson

BALL STATE UNIVERSITY
MUNCIE, INDIANA
47306

A Research Paper
Presented at
The Mid Western Educational Research Association
Annual Meeting
October 16-19, 1991
Chicago, Illinois

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Jay C. Thompson Jr.; Christina M. Rice; Van E. Cooley; C. Van Nelson
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

CG023798

SHOULD STUDENTS WORK?
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PART-TIME EMPLOYMENT AND SUBSTANCE USAGE

American society has placed considerable emphasis on the value of a part-time job for working-age students. Today, work has become the norm for high school students. This work is infrequently based upon real economic need; more likely than not it is based upon a desire for wants such as autos, stereos, televisions, designer clothes, etc. The bulk of student earning is spent upon such self wants as opposed to economic needs such as family financial problems or savings for future educational expenses. Nonetheless, many adults believe employment will teach a young person many important traits such as responsiblity, time-management, budget management, and organization skills. Although this may be the case for some young people, this study found interesting data to support the theory that students who are employed during the school year are more susceptible to substance use and abuse than those who do not work.

The purposes of the study were to determine:

1. What is the relationship between student part-time employment and tobacco use;
2. What is the relationship between student part-time employment and alcohol use;
3. What is the relationship between student part-time employment and marijuana use;

4. What is the relationship between student part-time employment and cocaine use;
5. What is the relationship between student part-time employment and over-the-counter drug use;
6. What is the relationship between student part-time employment and use of other substances.

This study was conducted using a 52 item survey questionnaire administered in six school districts in a Mid-Western suburban/rural setting. All students present in grades 6 through 12 responded anonymously to the questionnaire, resulting a sample size of 7,426. (See: Table 1) . Data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS-X) Program. The chi-squared statistic (Pearson) was employed to determine if a relationship existed between the variables. When comparing the employment variable with each of the substances surveyed in the study, shockingly high chi-squared values were obtained with probability of chance ocurrence less than .00001 from each comparison. There was a relationship between tobacco use and student employment; between alcohol use and student employment and between marijuana use and student employment. Student employment also correlated with cocaine use, and the use of other drugs. Student perceptions of parental use of these substances were also identified.

TABLE 1
POPULATION DEMOGRAPHICS

Number of Students Completing Survey:	7426
Percent of males:	49.8%
Percent of females:	50.2%

Grade Level Respondents by Percent:

6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th
15.0%	14.2%	14.1%	15.0%	14.5%	12.8%	11.9%

PERCENT OF TOTAL POPULATION EMPLOYED DURING SCHOOL YEAR:

Not Employed:*	59.3%
Employed Weekends:	11.8%
Part-time Weekdays:	12.1%
Part-time Weekdays and Weekends:	15.8%

*Note: Work Permits are not issued until the age of 15 for this population.

This study found a strong relationship between tobacco use and student employment as indicated by the chi-squared statistic. Of the total sample of 7,426 students, 18.4% were currently using tobacco products; an additional 21.5% of the sample had used tobacco at one time but quit. Therefore, of those who ever used tobacco, over 46% continued to use it. Of those students who reportedly still used tobacco products, 61.9% were students who held jobs during the school year (See: Table 2). The analysis also indicated tobacco use increased with grade level. Tobacco use doubled from the sixth to the seventh grade, doubled again from the eighth to ninth grade and again from the ninth to twelfth grade, with the biggest increases occurring from the sixth to ninth grade and the ninth to twelfth grade.

TABLE 2
USE OF TOBACCO BY EMPLOYMENT DURING SCHOOL YEAR

Count / Expected Value		Not Employed	Weekends and Week	Row Total
Never:		2987	1391	4378
		2625.5	1752.5	60.2%
Experimented/ Quit:		868	695	1563
		937.3	625.7	21.5%
Use:		509	827	1336
		801.2	534.8	18.4%
	Column	4364	2913	7277
	Total	60.0%	40.0%	100.0%

Chi-Square: Pearson Value: 403.37693 DF: 2 Significance: <.00000

(See Table 3). Furthermore 5% of the students who held jobs and used tobacco reported their parents knew they used the substance and approved; 3.1% said their parents did not care if they used tobacco. Also of the students who worked and used tobacco, 1.3% said they obtained tobacco products from their homes without permission, and 1.1% reported their parents provided them with tobacco. However, student self purchase of tobacco products was the major source of obtaining this substance for students who were employed and used tobacco.

TABLE 3
USE OF TOBACCO BY GRADE

Grade:	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th
Experimented/Quit:	9.2%	16.1%	21.8%	26.6%	26.6%	25.3%	26.3%
Use:	3.1%	7.8%	9.9%	18.6%	26.3%	33.5%	37.3%

Chi-Square: Pearson Value: 1062.94229 DF: 12 Significance: <.00000

Similar relationships were found between the use of alcohol and student employment. For example, of those students who currently used alcohol at the time of the survey, 61.1% were students who worked during the school year. Over 71% of the students who reported they never used alcohol were students who did not work during the academic year (See: Table 4).

TABLE 4
USE OF ALCOHOL BY EMPLOYMENT DURING SCHOOL YEAR

Count / Expected Value	Not Employed	Weekends & Week	Row Total
Never:	2532	1018	3550
	2128.2	1421.8	48.5%
Experimented/Quit:	1236	944	2180
	1306.9	873.1	29.8%
Use:	616	967	1583
	949	634	21.6%
Column Total	4384	2929	7313
	59.9%	40.1%	100.0%

Chi Square: Pearson Value: 492.64198 DF: 2 Significance: <.00000

Not only was employment correlated with alcohol usage, but as the grade level increased, so did alcohol usage. It was found that alcohol usage doubled from the

sixth to the seventh grade, tripled from the eighth to the ninth grade, and doubled from the ninth to the eleventh grade (See: Table 5). Obtaining alcohol from peers was the largest source for both students who worked as well as those who did not.When asked about the presence of alcohol at social functions, 55.2% of the students who held jobs answered alcohol was often present at the social functions.

Table 5
Use of Alcohol By Grade

Grade:	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th
Experimental/Quit	13.2%	22.6%	28.0%	32.2%	39.6%	35.2%	33.6%
Use:	2.2%	5.4%	8.7%	22.0%	31.9%	41.8%	49.3%

Chi-Square: Pearson Value: 2005.66433 DF: 12 Significance: <.00000

they attended. Of the students who reported alcohol was never present at social functions they attended, 72.4% were students who were not employed (See: Table 6). The list goes on and on, but a final alarming result was found.

TABLE 6
PRESENCE OF ALCOHOL AT SOCIAL FUNCTIONS
A: BY GRADE

Grade:	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th
Never:	81.4	69.9	54.6	28.3	22.6	20.6	19.9
Seldom:	13.7	24.3	32.8	36.4	32.3	27.3	23.3
Often:	4.8	5.8	12.7	35.3	45.1	52.1	56.8

Chi-Square: Pearson Value: 1839.19892 DF: 12 Significance: <.00000

B: BY EMPLOYMENT

	Count Expected Value	Not Employed	Weekends and Week	Row Total
Never		2124 1860.9	811 1074.1	2935 46.6%
Seldom		1060 1075.4	636 620.6	1696 26.9%
Often		808 1055.7	857 609.3	1665 26.4%
	Column Total	3392 63.4%	2304 36.6%	6296 100.0%

Chi-Square: Pearson Value: 261.02351 DF: 2 Significance: <.00000

Over 70% of the students who said they had frequently driven a motor vehicle while under the influence of alcohol or other drugs were students who worked during the school year. This pattern of driving under the influence and riding with such a driver increased during the high school years (See: Table 7).

TABLE 7
A: DRIVEN MOTOR VEHICLE UNDER INFLUENCE BY GRADE

Grade:	10th	11th	12th
Never:	88.1	72.7	62.1
Once +	9.8	20.2	29.1
Frequently:	2.1	7.1	8.8

Chi-Square: Pearson Value: 1099.67872 DF: 12 Signifance: <.00000

B: RIDDEN IN VEHICLE DRIVEN BY DUI BY GRADE

Grade:	9th	10th	11th	12th
Never:	68.3	62.4	53.8	50.8
Once +:	22.7	29.1	34.2	37.7
Frequently:	9	8.5	12.1	11.6

Chi-Square: Pearson Value: 572.71905 DF: 12 Significance: <.00000

When surveying the use of marijuana, similar relationships were found (See: Table 8). Of those students who reportedly used marijuana, 68.8% were students who worked during the week and/or on the weekends during the academic year. Further analysis revealed that marijuana use increased as grade level increased.

TABLE 8
USE OF MARIJUANA BY EMPLOYMENT

Count / Expected Value	Not Employed	Weekends and Week	Row Total
Never:	3868	2080	5948
	3561.7	2386.3	81.2%
Experimented/Quit	376	547	923
	552.7	370.3	12.6%
Use:	141	311	452
	270.7	181.3	6.2%
Column Total	4385	2938	7323
	59.9%	40.1%	100.0%

Chi-Square: Pearson Value: 361.28444 DF: 2 Significance: <.00000

Marijuana use almost tripled from the ninth to twelfth grade (See: Table 9). Furthermore, of those who had experimented with marijuana but had quit, 59.3%

TABLE 9
USE OF MARIJUANA BY GRADE

Grade:	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th
Experimented/Quit	1.2	4.2	5.8	11.8	17.7	22.8	30
Use:	0.9	1.4	1.9	5	8.3	14.3	14.5

Chi-Square: Pearson Value: 1037.75878 DF: 12 Significance: <.00000

were students who were employed. Only forty-three of the 7,426 students surveyed answered that their parents knew of their marijuana use and approved, but of those answering this way, 58.1% were students who held jobs. Some students reported that their parents did not care if they used marijuana. Of those who said this, 52.0% were employed and 48.0% were not employed.

Cocaine, a substance which has typically been thought of as the drug of the wealthy, and crack, a drug which is often associated with gangs and inner-city violence, were found in this Mid-Western suburban/rural setting; the results of this study found students who worked to be more susceptible to the use of this substance in this survey. In this survey 229 students reported they had experimented with cocaine; again the same type of relationship was seen between this experimentation and student employment. Nearly two-thirds of the students who had experimented with cocaine were students who worked during the school year. Not many students reported they currently used cocaine (only 1.1% of the

total population surveyed), but of the 83 students who answered this way, 51.8% were students who were employed. (See: Table 10).

TABLE 10
USE OF COCAINE BY EMPLOYMENT

	Count Exp. Value	Not Employed	Weekends and Week	Row Total
Never:		4273 4205	2743 2811	7016 95.7%
Experimented/Quit:		79 137.3	150 91.8	229 3.1%
Use:		40 49.7	43 33.3	83 1.10%
	Column Total	4392 59.9%	2936 40.1%	7328 100.0%

Chi-Square: Pearson Value: 69.21298 DF: 2 Significance: <.00000

The misuse of over-the-counter drugs was also surveyed in this study, over-the-counter drugs being diet pills, sleeping pills, and tranquilizers. The majority of the students who reportedly misused over-the-counter drugs were students who did not work. Of those students who said that they had experimented with these substances, 58.1% of the students who answered they currently used over-the-counter substances one or more times per day were students who did not hold a job. The relationship found between over-the-counter substances and student employment was opposite of the other relationships reported. Nevertheless, over-the-counter drug use increased as students entered or were in high school. (See: Table 11).

TABLE 11
USE OF OVER-THE-COUNTER DRUGS
BY GRADE

Grade:	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th
Experimented/Quit	27.7	32.4	33.8	38.7	38	42.1	43.8
Use:	8.9	12.7	14.7	19.3	21.5	19.8	19.5

Chi-Square: Pearson Value: 267.33870 DF: 12 Significance: <.00000

The use of numerous other substances was also surveyed in this study. Students were also questioned about their use or non-use of stimulants such as amphetamines, speed, uppers; depressants such as barbituates, downers, reds; inhalants such as glue, gasoline, aerosols; narcotics such as heroin, morphine, opium; and hallucinogens such as LSD, peyote, PCP. Results linking use of these substances and student employment were also found. For example, when reviewing the students' responses it was found of those students who used stimulants, 62.7% were students who worked; of the students who reportedly had experimented with depressants, 60.2% worked. Fifty-eight percent of the students who used inhalants were students who held jobs. The majority of the students who indicated they used narcotics were students who were employed. Over two-thirds of the students who had experimented with hallucinogens were holding jobs during the school year. These results indicated the use of the aforementioned drugs increased as grade level increased from the sixth to the

11th grade. After the 11th grade usage decreased slightly (See: Table 12).

TABLE 12
USE OF OTHER SUBSTANCES
BY GRADE

Grade:	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th
Use of: Stimulants (1):	1.2	1.8	2.2	5.4	5.7	6.7	4.9
Use of: Depressants (2):	0.5	0.9	0.8	2.2	2.8	3.9	2.8
Use of: Inhalants (3):	1.6	1.2	1.7	1.9	2.1	2.3	2.6
Use of: Narcotics: (4):	0.5	1.1	1	1.4	1.4	2.5	2.3
Use of: Hallucinogens(5):	0.7	0.8	1.1	1.8	2.8	3.8	3.2

Chi-Square: Pearson — Value: (1) 379.43253, (2) 150.01052, (3) 132.68044, (4) 145.69655, (5) 250.49178 — DF: 12 — Significance: <.00000

The analysis of other questions relating to student employment were revealing. For example, students who worked were more likely to come to school under the influence of drugs and alcohol than those not working (See: Table 13). When asking about grades, working students were less likely to get "A's" and more likely to receive "C's, D's, or F's" (See Table 14). Working students were also

TABLE 13
COME TO SCHOOL UNDER INFLUENCE OF DRUGS/ALCOHOL BY EMPLOYMENT

	Count Exp. Value	Not Employed	Weekends and Weeks	Row Total
Never:		3997 3874.2	2366 2488.8	6363 90.6%
Once +:		279 401.8	381 258.2	660 9.4%
	Column Total	4276 60.9%	2747 39.1%	7023 100.0%

Chi-Square: Pearson Value: 105.97012 DF: 1 Significance: <.00000

TABLE 14
GRADES ON REPORT CARD BY EMPLOYMENT

	Count Exp. Value	Not Employed	Weekends and Weeks	Row Total
More A's:		1397 1245.8	684 835.2	2081 28.5%
More B's:		1602 1614	1094 1082	2696 36.9%
More C's, D's, F's:		1376 1515.2	1155 1015.8	2531 34.6%
	Column Total	4375 59.9%	2933 40.1%	7308 100.0%

Chi-Square: Pearson Value: 77.80567 DF: 2 Significance: <.00000

more likely to have friends who use drugs or alcohol than non-working students. (See Table 15). When asked if the student would like help with a drug or alcohol problem, this study revealed the older the student, the less likely the student

would request help (See Table 16).

TABLE 15
HAVE FRIEND WHO USES ALCOHOL/DRUGS
BY EMPLOYMENT

	Count Exp. Value	Not Employed	Weekends and Weeks	Row Total
None Used:		1975 1615.2	717 1076.8	2692 37.0%
Yes Sometimes:		1570 1713	1285 1142	2855 39.2%
Yes Frequently:		820 1036.8	908 691.2	1728 23.8%
	Column Total	4365 60.0%	2910 40.0%	7275 100.0%

Chi-Square: Pearson Value: 343.55031 DF: 2 Significance: <.00000

TABLE 16
WOULD YOU LIKE HELP WITH DRUG/
ALCOHOL PROBLEM BY GRADE

Grade:	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th
Yes:	21.9	20.4	18.8	17	13.9	13.2	10.8
No:	78.1	79.6	82.2	83	86.1	86.8	89.2

Chi-Square: Pearson Value: 67.85125 DF: 6 Significance: <.00000

This tends to indicate few of these students understand or see the problem created as a result of substance use.

An interesting aspect of this study was the results of questions pertaining to students' perceptions of their parents' use or non-use of the substances surveyed. For example, 62.3% of the total sample answered they believed their parent(s) or guardian(s) drank alcohol but did not have a drinking problem; however 6.0% of the students said they thought their parent(s) or guardian(s) did have a drinking problem. Approximately 15% of the students reported they believed their parent(s) or guardian(s) had either used illegal drugs at one time or currently used illegal drugs. Results such as these make one realize the tremendous importance parents have as role models for their children. Employment during the school year did not appear to matter when it came to students' perceptions of their parents' use of tobacco, alcohol, and drugs; nevertheless parents are an important key in the results found in this study.

A few people may object to results such as those stated throughout this research study by saying many teenagers need to work. This study does not imply that students should not work, rather it **pleads to parents and guardians to monitor behavior of students who do work to see that money earned from employment be spent in constructive ways.** Another factor deserving consideration is the role of employers in providing education and a drug free work environment for student workers.

Today, some teenagers must work to help support their families or save for college. However, most high school students are now working so they can enjoy personal luxuries. Student employment can lead to an over-commitment to work at the expense of school. Some evidence exists which notes working students: run an increased risk of dropping out of school, display declining interest in academics and homework, and avoid rigorous academic classes which would challenge the student. The result is students develop an unrealistic view of the present and have little understanding of the future as influenced through their work experience or education commitment. Parents need to discuss such issues with their children. Such dialog can become an initial step to communicate concern and support for the individual student in the school and work environments. With tobacco, alcohol, and drugs a factor in today's society, it is imperative for parents, employers, and educators to ensure that students with extra spending money are not at risk of falling into the substance abuse trap through their work experiences.